

Safe Climate Emergency Resolution

Overview

I am very concerned that global warming has already set in motion disastrous changes to the Earth system, including accelerating ice mass loss from the Greenland and West Antarctic Ice Sheets, melting of the Arctic and thawing of the permafrost, ocean acidification, accelerating species extinction, and year round forest fires. In addition, 19,000 scientists in the 2nd Warning to Humanity (2017) agree that the only way to avoid “vast human misery” is to greatly change our quality of stewardship to the earth.

As a result, I am asking New Haven to join with other cities across the country and declare a climate emergency- entailing the mobilization of programs to offer mitigation, resilience, and education on global warming.

I call on Mayor Harp and the New Haven Board of Alders to pass the Safe Climate Emergency Resolution and immediately lead the community towards restoring a safe climate.

Signed:

NEW HAVEN RESOLUTION ENDORSING THE DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE EMERGENCY TO RESTORE A SAFE CLIMATE

WHEREAS, human activities have warmed the Earth enough to end the 12,000-year period of climate stability that allowed agriculture and human civilization to develop;

WHEREAS, global warming has already set in motion disastrous changes to the Earth system, including accelerating ice mass loss from the Greenland and West Antarctic Ice Sheets and the thawing of the borders of the vast Arctic permafrost, which holds twice as much stored carbon as the entire atmosphere;

WHEREAS, the world is on course for 2C of warming at which point many scientists believe that this temperature will initiate a chain of self-reinforcing changes (feedback loops) that dramatically accelerate warming (ex: hotter temperatures cause more forest fires, releasing more CO₂, causing more warming, causing more fires, etc);

WHEREAS, 73% of Connecticut residents think global warming will harm future generations; and over 80% of Americans think that CO₂ should be regulated as a pollutant;

WHEREAS, NASA scientists have concluded that the complete collapse of the Greenland Ice Sheet alone could raise sea levels 23 feet, creating several billion climate refugees and a “global-scale catastrophe”;

WHEREAS, Connecticut's biggest climate change risks are intimately linked to its 217 miles of Long Island Sound shoreline, where 40 percent of the population lives in 36 coastal communities that now faces the potentially dangerous combination of rising water levels and more frequent and intense storms;

WHEREAS, over 19,000 scientists have signed a Second Warning to Humanity proclaiming that “a great change in our stewardship of the Earth and the life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided”;

WHEREAS, the economy’s overshoot of a number of ecological limits and, increasingly, climate change, are driving the sixth mass extinction (1000 to 10000 times above the normal rate) of species, which could devastate much of life on earth for the next 10 million years;

WHEREAS, England’s chief scientific advisor warned that humanity faces a “perfect storm of global events” by 2030 as climate change, population growth, and growing demand for food, energy, and fresh water incite violent conflict over diminishing resources that are essential to human life and dignity;

WHEREAS, climate-fueled droughts, famines, and diseases have already killed millions of people in the Global South, and displaced millions more;

WHEREAS, indigenous and low-income communities and communities of color in the United States and abroad have suffered the gravest consequences of the extractive economy since its inception;

WHEREAS, the destruction caused last year by Hurricanes Harvey and Maria, as well as the record wildfires that devastated Northern California, confirm that the earth is already too hot for safety or justice;

WHEREAS, it is an act of unspeakable injustice and cruelty to knowingly subject our fellow humans now and into the future to societal disintegration, food and clean water shortages, economic collapse, and early death on an increasingly uninhabitable planet;

WHEREAS, Pope Francis has declared that humanity is on the verge of a “global suicide,” and that we will destroy ourselves if we destroy God’s creation;

WHEREAS, common sense and morality dictate that humanity can no longer safely emit greenhouse gases and must seek to restore a safe level of greenhouse gas concentrations and global average temperatures well below today’s levels;

WHEREAS, restoring a safe and stable climate requires an emergency mobilization to a near-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy across all sectors at wartime speed, a global effort to rapidly and safely remove all the excess carbon from the atmosphere, and safe measures to protect all people and species from the consequences of abrupt warming in the near-term;

WHEREAS, reversing ecological overshoot and halting the sixth mass extinction requires an effort to preserve and restore half the Earth’s biodiversity in interconnected wildlife corridors and to humanely stabilize population as well as a shift toward a society that prioritizes conservation, community and mutual aid over consumerism and narcissism;

WHEREAS, justice requires that those countries, classes and sectors that have contributed the most to this global climate and ecological cataclysm foot a commensurate financial burden in reversing it and protecting those most impacted from the lethal impacts underway already;

WHEREAS, New Haven cannot wait for more Superstorm Sandy’s, extreme rain and snow events, and accelerating sea level rise to begin an emergency climate mobilization;

WHEREAS, in present day, New Haven can rise to the challenge of the greatest crisis in history by organizing politically to catalyze a national and global climate emergency effort, employing local workers in a mobilization effort building and installing renewable energy infrastructure, growing local healthy food, restoring ecosystems, and retrofitting and redesigning our built environment, electric grid and transportation systems;

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that New Haven declares that we face an existential climate emergency that threatens our city, region, state, nation, civilization, the natural world, and humanity;

1. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that New Haven officially commits to leading an emergency mobilization effort that, with appropriate financial and regulatory assistance from state and federal authorities, ends community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by or before December 31, 2030, and immediately initiates an effort to safely draw down carbon from the atmosphere;

2. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that New Haven Board of Alders works with the Mayor to report back within 90 days on the establishment of a Climate Emergency Mobilization Department with all necessary powers to plan and coordinate all of the New Haven's climate and resilience responses, including emergency climate mitigation, resilience and adaptation programs;

3. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor directs all City Departments and proprietaries to report back in 6 months on maximum emergency reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from their operations feasible by the end of 2021, with the highest priority placed on an equitable and just transition in all sectors;

4. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that New Haven commits to educating our residents about the climate emergency and the broader ecological crisis, and working tirelessly to catalyze a climate emergency mobilization at the local, state, national, and global levels to protect our citizens as well as all the people and species of the world;

5. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that New Haven commits to work with local organizations and communities to include job creation, environmental justice, and public health in project development in a way that prioritizes equitable outcomes, particularly for poor and marginalized communities.

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